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BROADCASTERS VICTORY COUNCIL

MUNSEY BUILDING
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NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.
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EXECUTIVE 2113

Number 11

April 14th, 1942.

1. ORDER OF IMPORTANCE *

Throwing yourself with wild abandon into the job of helping America fight this war is one thing. Doing it with intelligence and directed effort is something else again. The latter, needless to say, is as different from the former as a high pressure hose is from a garden spray.

The co-operation of the broadcasting industry in our national war effort has thus far been exemplary. But there's still a good bit of waste motion. The pleas of multiple government agencies level a formidable barrage of paper at every station with each morning's mail. Frankly, there hasn't been much over-all co-ordination.

The Office of Facts and Figures will shortly issue a "Radio War Guide" which should do much to make sincere co-operation easier.

We've heralded this before, you'll remember, referring to it as the O.F.'s "priority list". Copies are now being printed and should go into the mail for all broadcast stations "soon".

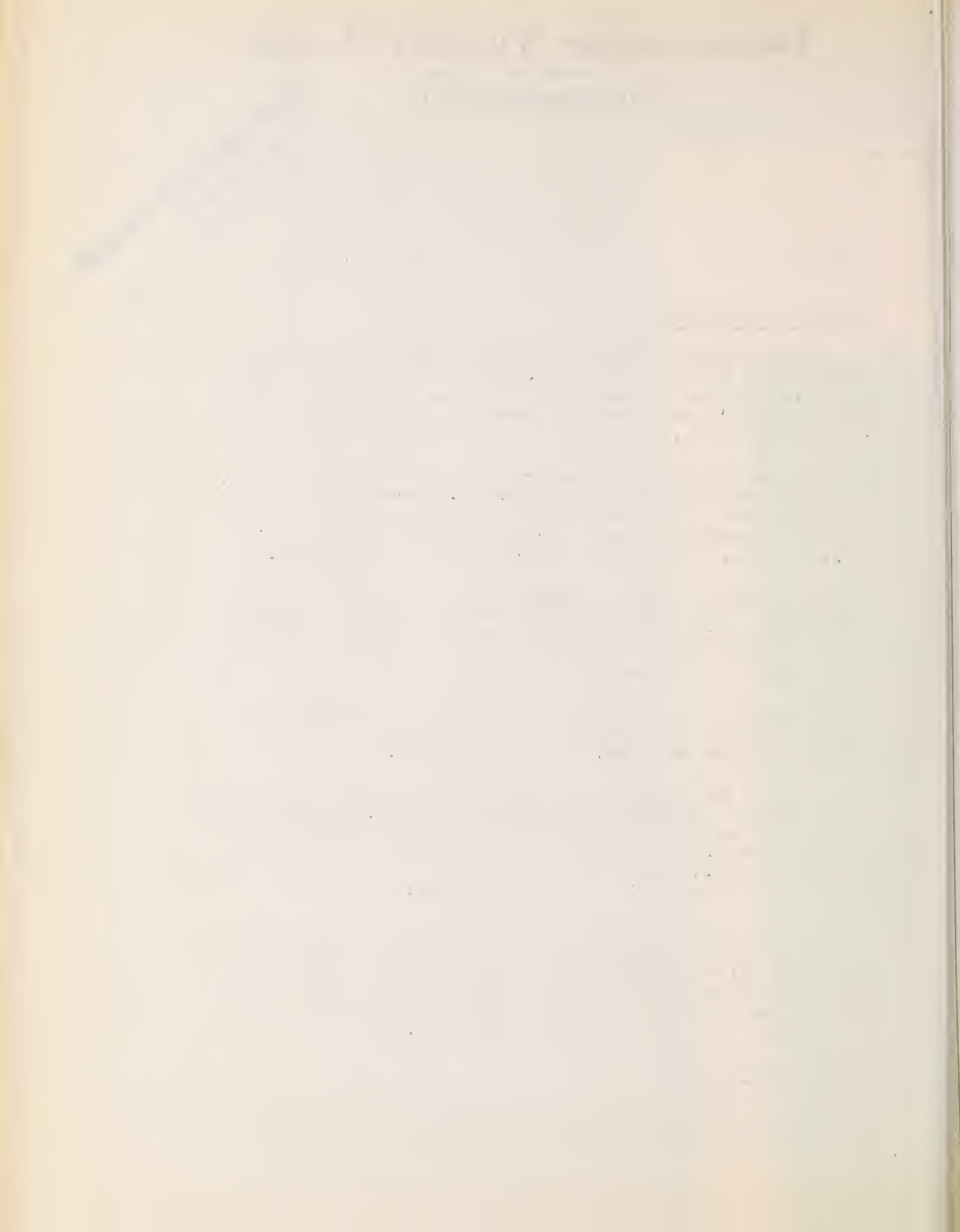
The Radio War Guide is designed to help you understand the relative programming importance of (1) factual war information, and (2) inspirational war themes. Both are important.

"Factual war information" relates to the individual assistance which radio can provide for many official endeavors, appeals, drives, educational campaigns. As we've said before - they aren't all equally important. They can't even be graded on a permanent basis in order of priority. It's like the standings of big league ball clubs. First, one's on top; next week it'll be another.

If you haven't already scouted them up, we'd like to point out that 30-odd specific subjects are being plugged in sundry scripts, announcements, transcriptions and whatnot regularly sent you by government agencies. The O.F. is naturally in a position to evaluate these. That's why we recommend that when you get your No. 1 copy of the Radio War Guide - give it right attention.

THE BACKGROUND OF 'AK**

That second function of the Guide, dealing with "inspirational war themes", can be mighty useful, too. Basically, there are six themes -



as delineated by President Roosevelt in his January 6 address before Congress on "The State of the Nation." Each comprises a segment of our national war effort. If any single one is missing, we stand a neat chance of losing - not just the war, not just our entity as a nation, not merely our trade....but our ideals, our way of life, even our homes and our lives.

First, there's "The Issue" - what we're fighting for, and why. Then there's (2) a concept of our enemies and what manner of men they are; (3) an understanding of our United Nations allies, and that we're fighting their battle just as much as they've been fighting ours; (4) the incredible importance of production to create better tools of war, faster; (5) the need not just for sacrifices, but sacrifices with understanding and a smile; and (6) the nature and needs and jobs of our fighting men.

Your inspirational programs, for the best effectiveness, should be built in these molds. It's not enough to tell the American people that they should do this and so. They must also know why, so far as is compatible with our rules of war.

Revised editions of the OFF's Radio War Guide will come off the presses as future developments warrant, automatically reaching every broadcast station in the country. And - lest you have the wrong impression - nobody's trying to tell us what to do or how we should run broadcasting. The Guide is for your convenience - and there isn't much sense in being a garden spray when a little intelligence can turn your station into a high pressure hose, working for democracy and the winning of the war.

PLEASE BELIEVE US**

It's an odd truism that if you tell the Average American "a large animal, closely resembling a prehistoric brontosaurus, was seen early today munching grass on a prairie outside Kansas City", he'll loudly say "gee whiz!" and proceed to block all the highways within 20 miles of the spot, hurrying to see the behemoth. (Remember the man from Mars?)

But if you utter a dire prediction of Spartan shortages to come - shortages in basic materials that have hitherto been plentiful as leaves of the forest - the general public views you with undisguised skepticism. Our little introspective thesis or psychology was set off - this time - by another warning that the good people of this country aren't ordering enough of next winter's coal right now.

The OFF puts it thus and so - with certain scholarly reserve - in a recent notice: "Last year we said, 'The oil shortage is the bunk.' This winter we said, 'The rubber shortage is the bunk.' We have seen the folly of both these statements. Let's not say, 'The coal shortage is the bunk,' because we'll regret it if a cold winter finds us without adequate fuel."

"Regret," brother, is hardly the word. We hope you're bounding home to your listeners that, although there's no scarcity of coal or miners, there's a severe shortage of transportation looming. Tell 'em how silly they'd look, running down to Wilkes-Barre or Scranton with their own wheel-barrows for coal. Yet frankly, that may be about the only way they'll ever get next winter's fuel if they don't place their order now.

RELAX. NO CONSPIRACY**

We hear echoes of a few station news editors getting jittery over the apparent handling of wire service stories based on Sunday afternoon Army communiques. It's to be presumed that you know the Sunday communique from the War Department is usually tapped out over news teletypes somewhere between 1 and 2 p.m. Recently these have been coming through marked "not for publication or broadcast until after 4:15."

Suspicious souls, here and there, were swift to ponder this stipulation and launch the rasy-checked rumor that afternoon newspapers were slyly behind it. (So radio wouldn't have a beat on them, naturally.)

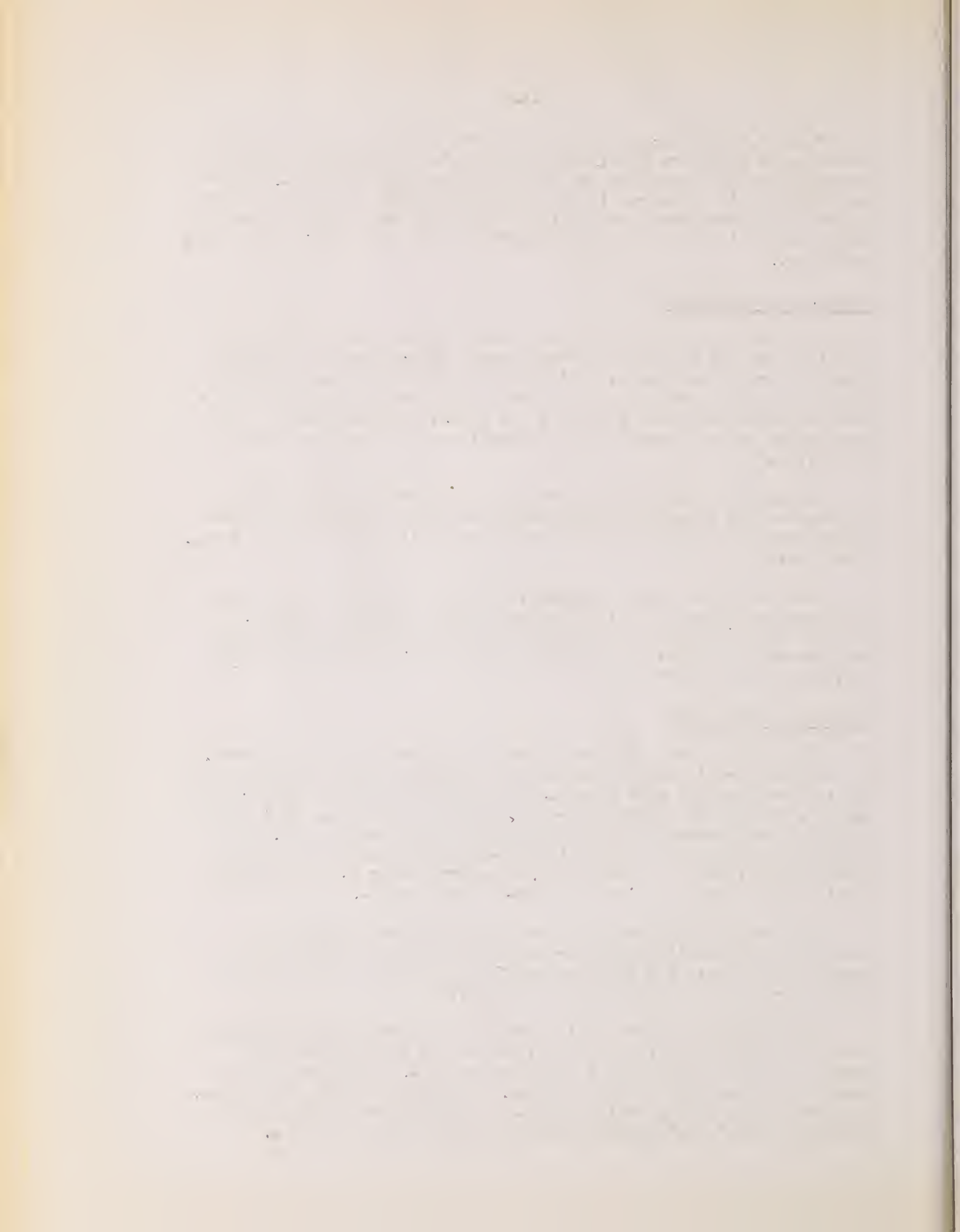
It's all quite easy to explain. There's a program on the air every Sunday afternoon called the "Army Hour" - 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The War Department just doesn't want its show to be scooped on the daily Army communique. Reasonable enough, don't you think? After all, whose news is it?

WE HAVE A BETTER WAY**

There are several different methods of getting people excited. Some of them aren't very good, and they certainly don't all react the same way on different people. The way the Nazis do it, for example, is neither successful - nor wanted - over here. It's all a matter of rabble-rousing versus intelligent morale-building. And regardless of what some patriotic drum-beaters say, the democratic brand of patriotism is a thinking, voluntary matter - not something that's beaten into you with the butt-end of a rifle.

We mention this because of occasional comments that some so-called morale-building broadcasts have stressed the "duty of young men to go die for their country" and "the drama of a wounded soldier crying out in pain for his mother."

That approach doesn't build morale. The first sounds like what Berlin and Tokio tell their people; the second sounds like what Berlin and Tokio would like to tell our people. You don't have to impress Young America about its duty. Present the facts, the needs, the perils that besiege this nation. A well-informed people will recognize this "duty" without being blindly preached into it.



Germany appeals to the natural conceit and avarice and carefully fostered ignorance of its people. That's rabble-rousing. America appeals to the intelligence, reason and self-preservation of its people. That, we think, is true morale-building - and radio's biggest job.

IT'S ALL IN HOW YOU DO IT**

We can say some more, and less generalized, things along that same line. It seems to us - although we're open to contradiction - that the most successful programs and the most effective announcements in this war effort have been the ones which provided convincing explanation for everything asked.

"This is War", of course, has been a classic example. The series gives the American people an explanation of why they should do this or support that. The Red Cross lets the American people know why, specifically, it needs funds, and how these are used. (Do you think the German Winter Relief Fund ever did anything like that? Or that public contributions were really voluntary?)

Quite a flood of specialized spot announcements, designed to fill the odd pauses of a broadcasting day, pass over the PVC's desk each week. Some of them are exceptionally clever and imaginative. Others sound about as tasty as an old shirt cardboard.

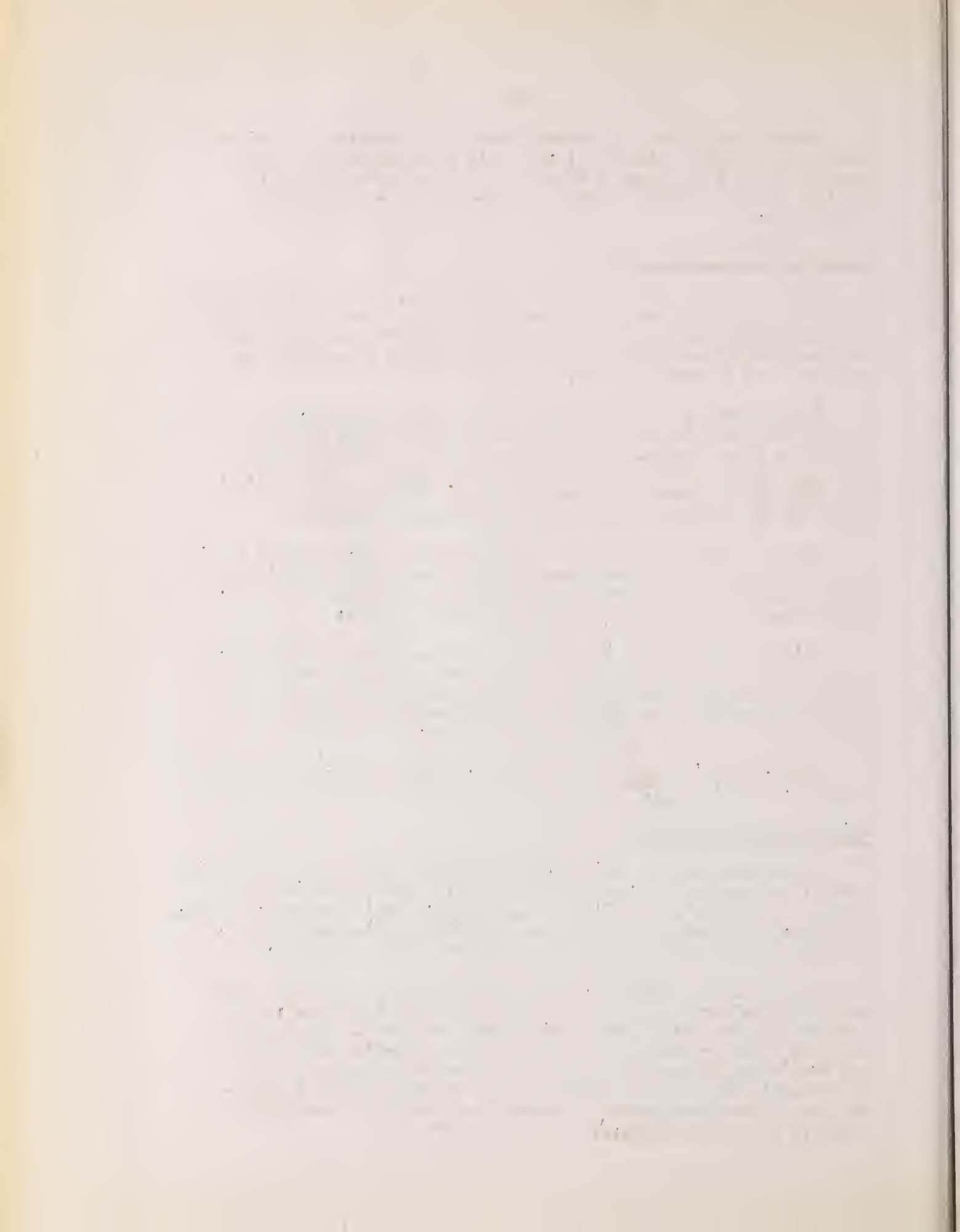
It's the same fact we've preached before. You can air plain, drab plugs of conventional weave until your announcers are turquoise in the face - but if they don't appeal to public reason and imagination - well, your station is only getting five miles to the gallows in its attempts to help the war effort.

First, tell 'em what they should do. Then, as far as humanly possible, tell 'em why.

WE'RE TURNING NO CHEEKS**

And another thing. It's time America got over this, "They won't dare hit us when we get our airplanes built. We'll show 'em we can defend our shores." What d'ya mean, "defend"? We're outgrowing that, and fast. This war won't be won by simply "defending our shores". The time is close when the pendulum will swing the other way.

Radio can help swing it. Last week we told you how "Treasury Defense Bonds" are soon to be known as "Treasury War Bonds". The next batch to be printed will carry that word "War". The men and women who drive rivets into the shiny wings of B-17's and B-24's and P-40's aren't going to be thrilled very strenuously to know their handiwork is simply patrolling the Puget Sound area. But - when they hear about American bombers over Berlin and American fighters at Port Moresby.... Get the point?



We've got to start making the listening public see this as an offensive as well as a defensive war. Remembering Pearl Harbor isn't enough. There must, and will, be things which the Axis can remember us for. And, with the goal of a United Nations offensive before them, there's no doubt that American production and morale and determination can be made to spurt far faster than if we cling to the plaint of "national defense".

It's all just a thought you might want to consider when building future inspirational shows.

DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT**

Our rumor retrievers came out of the brush last week with a nice one. It appears that in the Middle West there's a report squirrel-caging around to the effect that the U. S. Army is shipping raw draftees straight out of the country to Australia. The theory - it is whispered - hinges on the idea that if they're trained before leaving this country, and the transport gets sunk - well, it'd be a waste of good training.

Our informants neglect to state whether this rumor was related with a guttural accent or an occasional hissing intake of breath - but, sure as your Aunt Hannah's Easter hat, it isn't marked "Made in U.S.A."

There's no truth to it, of course. The BVC has checked with both the War Department and the OFF. Selectees get 13 weeks of basic training before they're shipped anywhere. And, never, never, are they moved into actual combat before being fully instructed in the unnice niceties of war.

SILENT, BUT LISTENING**

The BVC held a meeting of its Council members last Thursday (April 9th). It was decided not to file an appearance during the forthcoming hearing on the Sanders Bill before the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee.

The Council, however, will be an interested observer. If any point comes up that looks like it was intended to keelhaul the broadcasting industry, then the individual members of the BVC - representing their basic organizations - will speak up. And clearly.

FORUM FOR IDEAS**

The BVC representatives went to another meeting, too, last week. This was the session of the DCB's Domestic Broadcasting Committee, (April 8th) and, among other matters debated, was the previously-breached possibility of establishing an industry paper "pool" for transmitting tubes and spare parts. The "pool" would be able to secure replacements of these vital items through being assigned a

high priority rating. There's no doubt that if such a scheme becomes an actuality, many a station manager will sleep more soundly nights.

The Domestic Broadcast Committee seemed in accord that the plan - when properly set up - could be a boon to the industry. For the nonce, however, it's undergoing further committee scrutiny.

The above-mentioned DBC (of the DCB) gave thought to the subject of alert receivers to be operated by the signal from the key station. The matter is still being mulled.

A third result of the session came when the Committee recommended to the DCB that a class of "special" broadcast technicians be authorized for the duration, allowing replacement of license-holders (see BVC Newsletter #9.)

TWO THOUGHTS FOR MAY 10**

This coming May 10, the OFF points out, is a double-header. First, it's Mother's Day, which ought to start your fertile brains grinding on ideas to honor the filial bonds betwixt boys in the Army camps and their mothers at home, the visits of mothers to camps, et al.

Point No. 2 - which we touched on briefly last week - is that May 10th marks the second anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Holland and Belgium. A dedicated program, special music, occasional announcements can give tribute to those United Nations which are still with us, albeit under the guise of conquered countries. The OFF adds that if you want background material on how the Low Countries carry on the fight - material for scripts or announcements - you'll find the Netherlands Information Bureau, 10 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City, more than anxious to help you.

RADIO CAN HELP HERE, TOO**

On behalf of the Navy, the Marines, and the Coast Guard Welfare, there's a strenuous drive - as you probably know - being conducted by the National Citizens Committee of the Navy Relief Society. They have their eye on a total of \$5,000,000, the sum to help in the support of bereaved families of Navy men, to provide emergency loans and welfare aid for Navy families in dire circumstances, to extend care and educational advantages to the orphaned children of Navy men.

The national campaign is slated to run for the next few months. A series of eleven one-minute transcriptions, all on a single disc, have been prepared and are being mailed out to approximately 500 stations. They can be aired at your convenience, and include celebrity voices such as Madeleine Carroll, Merle Oberon, Eddie Cantor, Loretta Young, Tyrone Power, Gene Tunney, Frederic March, plus several more.

It should be pointed out that this is not a wartime organization which has suddenly come into being. The Navy Relief Society has existed since 1904, founded on the principal that "no widow, no orphaned children, no mother or other member of a Navy man's family shall suffer hardship if it can be prevented." The war and its added load of responsibility makes necessary this plea by the National Citizens Committee. Radio can well afford to help.



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